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REPORT, 1987-88: NEW ENGLAND REGION

The New England Region of the Mariological Society of America held its Tenth Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 10, 1987, at Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. The Reverend Matthew Morry, O.P., S.T.D., Director of the New England Region and professor of Mariology at Providence College, opened the meeting at 10:00 A.M. The Reverend G. Eugene Bondi, O.P., offered the opening prayer. The greetings of the college were brought to the gathering by the Reverend J. A. Driscoll, O.P.

The Keynote Speaker was the Very Reverend Bertrand A. Buby, S.M., Provincial of the Cincinnati Province of the Society of Mary. He holds advanced degrees from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, and the International Marian Research Institute, Dayton. His address was entitled "Mary and the Scriptures Today."

Fr. Buby developed his talk with Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, as a contextual background. He offered an insight into Mary through a synthesis of Mary in the New Testament by means of the symbols and titles of Mary. Examining Mary as she is situated within Salvation History helps us discover this Model of Discipleship as she is prophetically foreshadowed in the Old Testament (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:2-3) and presented to us as a reality in the New Testament.

As Jews and Islamics, so we too are people of the Book—but the Book as it is dynamically read in the Church and seen in the light of a *fuller* revelation. In the light of this *fuller* revelation, Fr. Buby looked at Mary in the New Testament under the symbols/titles of Mother, Woman, Virgin, Servant of the Lord and Disciple.

From a Christological aspect, motherhood is the strongest relational symbol we can apply to Mary, for she is the human mother of Jesus—Mother of the Risen Lord and Mother of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church. How powerful is this mother-child relationship is witnessed by the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (cc. 1-2). From that maternal "instinct," evident in her finding Jesus in the Temple (Lk. 2:46-50) and the searching out of Jesus as reported by Mark (3:31-35), to the maturity of the woman ready, as the New Eve, to cooperate with Jesus, the New Adam, as He signals the creation of a new dispensation at Cana, Mary enters into a new womanhood, universal in its extension (Jn. 2:1-12).

Now, scriptural texts emphasize a creative redemption through the agency of a woman: Mary. The biblical sweep runs from Galatians (4:4-5), to Cana (Jn. 2:1-11), to Calvary (Jn. 19:25-27), to Revelation (12:1-12). The *woman* who gives birth to the Son of God is the same who is with Jesus in anticipation at Cana and in fulfillment on Calvary. If the "hour" of Jesus signifies His return to His Father, Mary engages the "hour" and cooperates in its accomplishment. For, as "the woman in labor" (Jn. 16:21), Mary now rejoices in the fulfillment of the Divine Will.

The significance of Mary as the type of Mother and Woman can only be further stressed by her identity as "Virgin." This has value, for it points likewise to her relationship with God. The value of it is that this dedication to physical chastity lays the ground for the integral response to receive God's word.

Fr. Buby noted that, in a biblical sense, men and women of virtue are called "servants of the Lord." What is essential in the relationship is absolute commitment to God. Thus, Mary can directly identify herself as "handservant of the Lord" (Lk. 1:38, 48). There is a striking parallel between the *kenosis* of Jesus and the consent of Mary. "This emptying-out of Jesus is complemented by the humility, openness, and poverty of Mary who is totally dependent on and committed to God." How significant it is that Mary gives herself this title as she seeks to express her love of God.

And there is no tension between servant and believer, for Mary is proclaimed blessed as believer. Hence, what God has promised her will see fulfillment (Lk. 1:45). Luke presents Mary as "the first person to witness an active and dynamic life of faith in God and then in her son." God speaks, and Mary entrusts her whole self freely to God in an obedience of faith. So, in this word—this "yes"—of Mary, the promises of God are fulfilled and Mary is fulfilled in her own womanhood; the faithful disciple inaugurates the New Covenant, for "our entire pilgrimage of faith as Christians is begun with her attentive heart attuned to the Lord at the moment of the Annunciation."

Following a period of discussion, a Marian Liturgy was celebrated in Aquinas Chapel. The homilist was the Reverend G. Eugene Bondi, O.P. In his homily, Fr. Bondi showed the influence in salvation history of Mary's role as faithful servant upon our personal response to God's call and our identity as Christians.

Luncheon followed the Marian Liturgy. Afterwards, a brief business meeting was held at which the announcement was made of a colloquium on Pope John Paul II's encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, to be held Saturday, December 5, 1987, at Providence College. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

REV. MATTHEW F. MORRY, O.P.
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